

RESOLUTION NUMBER 219
HONORING DR. HELEN NASH

WHEREAS, the Nash family has selflessly served the families of St. Louis, where a Nash pediatrician has been treating children and reassuring parents since the 1940s; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Helen Nash was a pioneer for women, for Black Americans, and a pioneer in medicine. Graduating medical school in 1945 as one of only four women in her graduating class, she began an internship at Homer G. Phillips Hospital, the only hospital in St. Louis open to Black doctors. She helped transform their care for premature babies, reducing infant mortality with simple, effective changes in practice and organization within the neonatal unit; and

WHEREAS, in 1949 she became the first Black woman to join the staff at St. Louis Children's Hospital, rising to become president of the staff in 1977, a position she held until 1979; and

WHEREAS, also in 1949 she became the first Black woman to join the faculty of Washington University School of Medicine, where she served as a professor of clinical pediatrics. In 1993 she served as the school's dean of minority affairs until retiring in 1996; and

WHEREAS, also in 1949, Helen Nash opened her own private practice to serve children; and

WHEREAS, all the while, Dr. Helen Nash was renaissance woman, having served on:

the Missouri Botanical Garden Board for more than two decades,

on the board of the St. Louis Symphony, where she endowed a guest artist's chair,

and on the Missouri Historical Society board of trustees, where she donated a collection of historical works related to Black culture, including first editions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, as well as works by Langston Hughes, rare maps documenting the slave trade, and manuscripts related to emancipation in the Civil War era; and

WHEREAS, her brother, Dr. Homer Nash, Jr., would follow in 1952 for his own residency at Homer G. Phillips; and

WHEREAS, Homer Nash was awarded a Bronze Star and Purple Heart in the Second Great World War; and

WHEREAS, he, too, opened his own practice, renting space above a drug store in 1955; and

WHEREAS, both doctors Nash were advocates not only for the children in their clinics, but for the children of greater St. Louis, urging physicians to report mistreatment by parents or caretakers, convincing city leaders to address lead poisoning and rat bites, all too common problems among the underserved children in St. Louis, and being early adopters of using nurse practitioners to help extend the care available to the community; and

WHEREAS, Homer's daughter, Alison Nash, continues the legacy as a pediatrician today, a true native daughter of St. Louis, having graduated from our public schools in 1973; and

WHEREAS, following in her father's footsteps, she also served nobly in the US military. After medical school she spent an eleven-year career with the Navy, rising to the rank of Lt. Commander. Alison Nash returned home to join her father at his North City pediatric clinic where she, too, has led professionally and in the community; and

WHEREAS, the Nash family has been highly decorated in acknowledgment of its contributions to St. Louis and to medicine. Both Helen and Homer Nash were awarded Lifetime Achievement Awards in Health Care by the *St. Louis American*. Alison Nash received the Stellar Performer in Healthcare award from the *St. Louis*

American and was named Community Advocate of the Year by St. Louis Children's Hospital. Helen Nash was honored with lifetime honorary membership into the St. Louis Medical Society and Medical Women's Society. The NAACP awarded Helen Nash its Women's Medal of Honor, while both the University of Missouri-St. Louis and Webster University awarded her honorary doctorates; and

WHEREAS, in honor of Helen Nash's pioneering work, the Washington University School of Medicine has awarded the Dr. Helen E. Nash Academic Achievement Award annually to a student since 1996, and in 2014, the St. Louis Children's Hospital began offering an internship to young woman of color in Dr. Helen Nash's honor; and

WHEREAS, the Nash family has come to define pediatrics for generations of St. Louis parents and children, and as such, for all the reasons mentioned herein and for many others, this body recently passed a bill to make Nash Way a street in the city of St. Louis.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis that we pause in our deliberations to recognize the many accomplishments and achievements of the Nash family. We further direct the Clerk of this Board to spread a copy of this Resolution across the Minutes of these proceedings and to prepare a commemorative copy to the end that it may be presented to the family at a time and place deemed appropriate by the Sponsor.

Introduced this 11th day of March, 2022 by:

The Honorable Tina Pihl, Alderwoman 17th Ward

The Honorable Shameem Clark-Hubbard, Alderwoman 26th Ward

Adopted this 11th day of March, 2022 as attested by:

Terry Kennedy
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Lewis Reed
President, Board of Aldermen